

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8155

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 11448

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHU, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: AN OPPOSITIONIST VIEW OF THE GOP'S MOVES

- TOWARD NORMALIZATION

1. SUMMARY. OPPOSITIONIST SALONGA, WHO HAS JUST BEEN DENIED GOP PERMISSION TO TRAVEL TO A CHURCH CONFERENCE IN GENEVA, IS CHARACTERISTICALLY SKEPTICAL ABOUT RECENTLY REPORTED GOP STEPS TOWARD NORMALIZATION. HE BELIEVES THERE HAS BEEN NO SUBSTANTIVE LIBERALIZATION AND DOUBTS THIS WILL OCCUR. HE OFFERS SOME INTERESTING ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS INTO THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT, THE SUBJECT OF CURRENT GOP CONCERN, AND SUGGESTS GOP EXAGGERATES STRENGTH OF MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH DCM AND POL COUNSELOR JULY 6 FORMER SENATOR SALONGA DISCUSSED RECENTLY REPORTED GOP MOVES TOWARD NORMALIZATION IN CHARACTERISTICALLY SKEPTICAL TERMS. SPEAKING EQUABLY BUT WITH MANIFEST CONVICTION, SALONGA ASSERTED IN ESSENCE THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO REALLY SUBSTANTIVE MOVEMENT TOWARD LIBERALIZATION AND EXPRESSED STRONG DOUBT THAT SUCH WOULD MATERIALIZE.

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3. SALONGA BEGAN BY REPORTING THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AGENCY (NISA) HAD JUST REJECTED HIS REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE TO TRAVEL TO GENEVA IN AUGUST TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. SALONGA DID NOT KNOW THE REASON FOR THE TURN-DOWN ALTHOUGH HE SUPPOSED THAT IT MIGHT RELATE TO THE FACT THAT HE HAD MADE TWO SPEECHES SUPPORTING THE LABAN

IN THE APRIL ELECTIONS AND IN DISTRICTS OF METRO MANILA WHERE THE LABAN HAD COME OUT ON TOP. HE SAID HE HAD ALREADY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH JUSTICE TEEHANKEE TO ADVISE THAT HE INTENDED TO APPEAL THE NISA TURN-DOWN TO THE SUPREME COURT. HE INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT CARE HOW THE COURT WOULD RULE, THAT HIS PURPOSE WOULD BE TO GAIN PUBLICITY, AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE FALSEHOOD OF MARCOS' DECLARATION AT THE WORLD LAW CONFERENCE LAST AUGUST THAT THE TRAVEL BAN HAD BEEN LIFTED. SALONGA ALSO REPORTED THAT A CLOSE FRIEND OF HIS, A SPANISH NATIONAL PERMANENT RESIDENT, HAD RECENTLY BEEN DENIED CLEARANCE TO MAKE A BUSINESS TRIP ABROAD. HIS FRIEND WAS ADVISED BY GOP AUTHORITIES THAT CLEARANCE WAS WITHHELD SINCE HE HAD HOSTED A LUNCHEON FOR SOME FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WHO HAD WRITTEN CRITICALLY OF THE GOP.

4. SALONGA OFFERED LITTLE ON THE RECENT DETAINEE RELEASES EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT THE LISTS INCLUDED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF DETAINEES WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN RELEASED A CONSIDERABLE TIME AGO. HIS GROUP, HE SAID, WILL DO AN ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTED RELEASES, BUT THAT WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO COMPLETE.

5. AS FOR THE NEW INTERIM PARLIAMENT, SALONGA DISCOUNTED SUGGESTIONS BY GOP OFFICIALS THAT THAT BODY WAS BEGINNING TO HAVE (OR COULD EVER HAVE) ANY APPRECIABLE INFLUENCE
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ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES. THE IBP, HE CONTENDED, WAS VERY MUCH A MARCOS CONTROLLED INSTRUMENT, AND HE COMPARED THE SWEEPING POWERS OF THE OLD CONGRESS WITH THE VERY LIMITED ROLE OF THE NEW BODY. HE NOTED THAT MARCOS THUS FAR HAD BEEN QUICK TO CUT OFF DEBATE WHEN IT APPEARED TO BE GETTING OUT OF HAND. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER THE IBP WOULD EVER BE GIVEN ANY SERIOUS INVESTIGATORY MANDATE BECAUSE OF MARCOS' CONCERN NOT TO EXPOSE CORRUPTION IN HIGH PLACES. HE SAID HE COULD VOUCH FOR THE ACCURACY OF REPORTS THAT MARCOS WAS STILL ISSUING PRESIDENTIAL DECREES AND POST-DATING THEM JUNE 11, THE DATE BEFORE THE IBP (TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAS PUBLICLY PROMISED TO TURN OVER HIS LEGISLATURE POWERS) WAS CONSTITUTED.

6. SALONGA SAID THAT THE LABAN AND LIBERAL PARTIES ARE CONTINUING TO DEVELOP THEIR ORGANIZATIONS ON A NATIONAL BASIS BUT THAT THE QUESTION OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THESE TWO GROUPINGS HAD NOT YET BEEN WORKED OUT. HE NOTED THAT THE SECOND EDITION OF THE ILLEGAL LIBERAL PARTY NEWSPAPER HAD APPEARED, WITH A RUN OF 6,000 COPIES, BUT INDICATED HE DID NOT THINK MUCH OF THE EFFORT. HE WAS MILDLY CRITICAL OF TANADA'S REPORTED REQUEST TO MARCOS FOR

PERMISSION TO INAUGURATE A LABAN NEWSPAPER SINCE HE FELT THAT LABAN SHOULD JUST GO AHEAD AND PUBLISH WITHOUT GOP SANCTION.

7. SALONGA PROVIDED A FEW ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS INTO THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (DSM) WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF EXPRESSED GOP CONCERN IN RECENT DAYS (MANILA 11141). THE DSM, HE SAID, GOES BACK TO PRE-MARTIAL LAW DAYS AND DRAWS ITS PRIMARY INSPIRATION FROM EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN-SOCIALISM. HE CONCEDED HOWEVER THAT THE DSM, LED BY INTELLECTUALS AND CHURCHMEN, DOES ENVISION THE

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POSSIBILITY OF ARMED STRUGGLE AGAINST EXISTING AUTHORITY. THE DSM, HE ADDED, IS ONLY ONE ELEMENT OF THE PEOPLES LEAGUE FOR FREEDOM ("THE KABAKA") OF WHICH HE IS CHAIRMAN. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, SALONGA SAID THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE KABAKA HAD YET TAKEN A DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO ESPOUSE THE DSM'S "ARMED STRUGGLE" PHILOSOPHY. HE ADDED THAT THIS WOULD BE A VERY PAINFUL DECISION FOR HIM BUT INDICATED THAT THE QUESTION HAD BECOME PERTINENT AFTER THE EVENTS OF APRIL WHEN MARCOS CLEARLY SHOWED THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF COUNTENANCING FREE ELECTIONS, NOW OR IN THE FUTURE. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE DSM HAD SUBSTANTIAL POTENTIAL FOR POPULAR SUPPORT BUT THAT THE GOP WAS CONSIDERABLY EXAGGERATING THE PRESENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH OF THE MOVEMENT AND THE EXTENT OF ITS FOLLOWING. MURPHY

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